

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Ravinia Festival will celebrate its 100th
3 anniversary in 2004; and

4 WHEREAS, The Ravinia Festival has achieved a worldwide
5 reputation as a concert venue of distinction for both
6 classical music and popular entertainers from the world of
7 jazz, folk, pop, country, opera, and dance; and

8 WHEREAS, The Ravinia Festival began as a carnival
9 intended to attract riders to the 3-year-old Chicago and
10 Milwaukee Electric Railroad; and

11 WHEREAS, The original Ravinia Park opened on August 15,
12 1904 as a year-round amusement park that featured an electric
13 air swing, skating rink, toboggan slide, electric fountain,
14 pavilion, casino, and even a small hotel; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1906, classical music made its debut at
16 Ravinia when Walter Damrosch conducted the New York Symphony
17 at the park, setting the tone for nearly a century of stellar
18 musical entertainment; and

19 WHEREAS, All these attractions failed to lure enough
20 riders to the fledgling rail line, and in 1908, the Chicago
21 and Milwaukee Railroad fell into receivership; and

22 WHEREAS, The Ravinia Park Association raised \$15,000 to
23 keep the park open; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1911, the Ravinia Park Company purchased the
25 park from the floundering railroad company; and

26 WHEREAS, On opening night in 1918, Ravinia abandoned its
27 usual format of presenting arias or individual acts and
28 presented a full-length production of the opera "Aida"; and

29 WHEREAS, During the darkest days of the Great Depression,

1 Ravinia closed its doors from 1932 to 1936 rather than
2 continue operation with diminished-quality performances; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1936, Ravinia reopened as the Ravinia
4 Festival, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, and the
5 Chicago Symphony Orchestra signed to play a five-week
6 program; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1944, the park was deeded to the Ravinia
8 Festival Association, which still operates the Festival
9 today; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1949, the original wooden pavilion burned
11 down and a new concrete pavilion doubled the capacity of the
12 burned-down structure and remains with some modifications the
13 centerpiece of the Festival today; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1969, the London Symphony Orchestra made its
15 Ravinia premiere and a new sound system was installed; and

16 WHEREAS, In the 1970's, the first rock concerts were
17 staged at Ravinia and featured such performers as Janis
18 Joplin and attracted crowds of upwards of 25,000 people; and

19 WHEREAS, Many jazz greats performed at Ravinia, including
20 Benny Goodman and his band, Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis,
21 Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious
22 Monk, Wynton Marsalis, Herbie Hancock, and Oscar Peterson;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, In 1993, Ravinia began an intensive overhaul of
25 the park and state-of-the-art facilities were open to the
26 public in time for the 60th anniversary of Ravinia's
27 reopening in 1995; and

28 WHEREAS, These changes brought expanded customer service
29 and enhanced dining opportunities; and

30 WHEREAS, Today, Ravinia Festival offers an ambitious

1 schedule of concerts and educational programs year-round;
2 therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
5 we congratulate the Ravinia Festival on its upcoming
6 one-hundredth anniversary in 2004 and the many musical and
7 educational programs it provides to its community; and be it
8 further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 presented to Mr. Welz Kauffman, President and Chief Executive
11 Officer of the Ravinia Festival.